

Agriculture and Rural Economy Directorate  
Scottish Government  
St Andrew's House  
Regent Road  
Edinburgh  
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18 March 2025

To Whom It May Concern:

**Response to Rural Delivery Plan: vision, strategic objectives, and key performance indicators survey**

Scottish Renewables (SR) is the voice of Scotland's renewable energy industry. Our vision is for Scotland to lead the world in renewable energy. We work to grow Scotland's renewable energy sector and sustain its position at the forefront of the global clean energy industry. We represent over 360 organisations that deliver investment, jobs, social benefit and reduce the carbon emissions which cause climate change.

Our members work across all renewable technologies, in Scotland, the UK, Europe and around the world, ranging from energy suppliers, operators and manufacturers to small developers, installers, and community groups, as well as companies throughout the supply chain. In representing them, we aim to lead and inform the debate on how the growth of renewable energy can provide solutions to help sustainably heat and power Scotland's homes and businesses.

SR appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback on the Rural Delivery Plan: vision, strategic objectives, and key performance indicators. We are happy to answer any questions you have.

Sincerely,



Megan Amundson  
**Head of Onshore Wind & Consenting**  
**Scottish Renewables**

## Survey Questions and Responses

### 1. Do you agree with the proposed vision for rural Scotland?

- **Yes**
- No
- Partially

### 2. Do you wish to comment?

Scottish Renewables welcomes the Scottish Government's proposed vision and recognition of the key role rural Scotland will play in powering our clean energy future. The renewable industry's projects support this vision by generating economic and environmental activity in rural areas and providing sustainable, equitable, and inclusive livelihoods.

### 3. Do you agree with the proposed strategic objective for economy and digital connectivity?

Proposed Strategic Objective:

"To support and promote an inclusive, innovative, productive, and sustainable wellbeing rural economy, providing direct benefits for local communities, revitalising them through the growth of the green economy, and delivering robust and inclusive access to digital infrastructure and services across rural Scotland."

- **Yes**
- No
- Partially

### 4 . Do you wish to comment?

The renewable energy sector provides significant investment in communities through growing local supply chains and providing local jobs for renewable energy developments. We strongly support the growth of a green economy that addresses climate change. The Scottish Onshore Wind Sector Deal reinforces this support with commitments the onshore wind sector has made to deepen local investments. In cooperation with the renewable energy industry, the Scottish Government has invested in research that identifies the skills, education and training gaps for onshore wind and solar energy developments. Research shows five times more civil contractors will be required by 2027 than in 2024. More than 46% of these individuals will be required to build wind farms in Highland and Dumfries and Galloway. For ongoing operations and maintenance of wind farms, 2.5 times as many roles will be required in 2030 than in 2024, with 37% of that increase in Highland and Dumfries and Galloway. Through the Onshore Wind Sector Deal, the onshore wind industry has committed to filling these gaps.

## 5. Do you agree with the proposed strategic objective for population, education and skills?

Proposed Strategic Objective:

"To support sustainable local communities by addressing population challenges in rural Scotland, to equip people with the skills, resources and education to develop a highly valued and adaptive workforce, and to ensure that workforce is supported to work through high quality, accessible and affordable childcare across rural Scotland."

- **Yes**
- No
- Partially

## 6. Do you wish to comment?

The Scottish Onshore Wind Sector Deal includes creating appropriate educational and training opportunities to support renewable energy development, particularly as we grow local supply chains to support jobs in less dense areas, where many renewable energy projects are built. Growing the local supply chains around renewable energy developments will provide more jobs in rural areas. Research shows that the future onshore wind farm developments will be in remote and rural areas of Scotland, such as the Highlands and Dumfries and Galloway. This will increase the skills requirements in those areas. Working with the Scottish Government and industry, we are developing plans to more effectively train a workforce to take on well-paying jobs supporting renewable energy developments. The Climate Emergency Skills Action Plan acknowledges the need to create a place-based approach to education and training to target regional needs, with enterprise agencies such as Highland and Islands Enterprise leading the effort.

## 7. Do you agree with the proposed strategic objective for social justice?

Proposed Strategic Objective:

"To address rural poverty and existing economic, social and environmental inequalities across rural Scotland, to empower local communities to ensure Scotland's natural capital is owned and used fairly, and that our rural communities can access high quality, affordable and accessible services and facilities that positively enhance their lives."

- Yes
- No
- **Partially**

### **8. Do you wish to comment?**

The onshore wind industry is committed to offering shared community ownership whenever feasible and over 50% of projects offer it. However, discussions of shared ownership tend to focus on the potential rewards but rarely acknowledge the financial risks. Communities considering such offers receive independent financial advice. Based on this advice, most decide that the financial risks involved mean it is not financially prudent to take up these offers. This results from the risk that communities with shared ownership would be liable for a share of any financial losses. With Transmission Network Use of Service (TNUoS), charges rising, the potential of zonal pricing being introduced and the expectation of more negative pricing periods in the future, financial losses are a significant concern. In considering how this strategic objective will be delivered, the commitment to ensuring natural capital is owned and used fairly mustn't place undue financial risks on communities.

### **13. Do you agree with the proposed strategic objective for environment and climate change?**

Proposed strategic objective:

"To contribute to national action to address the threat of climate change and to restore nature, alongside seizing the economic opportunities and community benefits from a circular economy and the just transition to net zero."

- **Yes**
- No
- Partially

### **14. Do you wish to comment?**

Renewable energy developments provide significant benefits to local economies. For example, a report by BiGGAR Economics demonstrated that SSE Renewables, through seven wind farms in the Highlands, supplied over £500 million to the local economy during the development and operations of those wind farms. Supporting renewable energy developments that combat climate change will benefit communities and help rural communities be part of the just transition. See previous response about the local supply chain investment and jobs.

### **19. Do you have any further comments on the proposed strategic objectives?**

Renewable energy development will support many of the objectives in the Rural Delivery Plan. In addition, we encourage acknowledging within the Rural Delivery Plan the importance of the Regional Energy Strategic Plan (RESP) coming from the National Energy System Operator (NESO), which will have a key role in informing and coordinating plans around local

infrastructure developments needed to support the expansion of renewable energy development and reaching net-zero targets. The Rural Delivery Plan must align with the RESP and support the RESP for its strategic objectives to be realised.