

Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Transport

UPDATE ON NATIONAL PUBLIC ENERGY AGENCY & NEXT STEPS

Purpose

1. To update on progress since my submission of 30 September, and to seek your agreement on the following three points:
 - (i) [Out of Scope]
 - (ii) the outline **purpose of the virtual Agency** and potential **options for its establishment** by September 2022 and beyond; and
 - (iii) to **launch a Call for Evidence** on the role and remit of the Energy Agency, on 3 December.

Priority

2. [Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]

[Out of Scope]

3. [Out of Scope]

4. [Out of Scope]

5. [Out of Scope]

- (i) [Out of Scope]

6. [Out of Scope]

- [Out of Scope]
- [Out of Scope]
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7. [Out of Scope]

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11.[Out of Scope]

12.[Out of Scope]

13.[Out of Scope]

(ii) Purpose and Governance of Virtual Agency

14. As was outlined in the 21/22 Programme for Government we have committed to establishing a virtual Agency by September 2022. The main reason for this stepped approach is to ensure continued delivery of the Heat in Buildings programme. In establishing a virtual Agency, decisions will need to be taken on its **purpose** and **structure/governance arrangements**.

Purpose

15.[Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]. We are proposing that the virtual Agency's purpose will be:

- Development work to inform design and set up of the dedicated Agency; and
- Oversight and co-ordination of on-going programme delivery.

16.[Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]

Structure/Governance Arrangements

17. You have stated publically, (NZET Committee appearance 14 September) that initially the virtual Agency would be delivered in-house – **this is our current working assumption**.

18.[Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]

19.[Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]

20.[Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]

21.[Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]

22.[Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]

(iii) Call for Evidence

23. As indicated in a separate submission from [Redacted - Regulation 11(2) – Personal Data of a third party], dated 17 November, we propose publishing a Call for Evidence on the development of the Agency on 3 December, coinciding with the release of the legacy Public Energy Company 'Outline Business Case'.

24. The purpose of the Call for Evidence would be to:

- **Seek early views on the role and remit of the Agency;**
- **Inform the Agency development process to ensure key decisions are based on robust evidence** of the potential value added, outcomes and change mechanisms required to deliver the scale and pace of transformational change required;

- **Evidence transparency** in strategic planning and development of the new body, and a **commitment to collaborate** with stakeholders across the existing landscape to inform this process; and
- **Manage stakeholder expectations and any concerns** regarding the potential impact of the Agency on current programme delivery partners, and wider organisations involved in the heat decarbonisation landscape.

25. We propose running the Call for Evidence from early December 2021 to beginning of February 2022, to allow respondents sufficient time to consider and feedback, taking into account holidays over the festive period. [Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]

26. [Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]

Recommendation

27. You are asked:

- [Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]
- **For your views on the strategic purpose of the virtual Agency** [Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]
- **For your agreement to issue a Call for Evidence on 3 December.**

[Redacted - Regulation 11(2) – Personal Data of a third party]
 Senior Responsible Owner, National Public Energy Agency
 Heat in Buildings Division

Copy List:	For Action	For Comments	For Information		
			Portfolio Interest	Constit Interest	General Awareness
Minister for Zero Carbon Buildings, Active Travel and Tenants' Rights		X	X		
DG Economy DG Net Zero Kersti Berge Sue Kearns [Redacted - Regulation 11(2) – Personal Data of a third party] [Redacted - Regulation 11(2) – Personal Data of a third party] [Redacted - Regulation 11(2) – Personal Data of a third party] [Redacted - Regulation 11(2) – Personal Data of a third party] [Redacted - Regulation 11(2) – Personal Data of a third party] [Redacted - Regulation 11(2) – Personal Data of a third party] [Redacted - Regulation 11(2) – Personal Data of a third party]					

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DECC Operations Team Mailbox

[Out of Scope]

[Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]

[Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]

[Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]

Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Net Zero and Just Transition

NATIONAL PUBLIC ENERGY AGENCY-HEAT AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY SCOTLAND- UPDATE

Priority and Purpose

1. This is a routine submission to:
 - Provide an update on the National Public Energy Agency – Heat and Energy Efficiency Scotland (HEES);
 - [Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]
 - [Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]
 - [Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]

Recommendation

2. Recommends that you:
 - [Out of Scope]
 - [Out of Scope]
 - Meet the Chair of the Agency’s Independent Strategic Board, Professor Lorne Crerar.

Context and Issues

3. [Out of Scope]
4. The virtual Agency – Heat and Energy Efficiency Scotland – was established in October 2022. It comprises the Heat in Buildings (HiBs) Delivery Division and is responsible for delivering all Scottish Government delivery programmes.
5. To date the virtual agency has a minimal external presence. Its primary external presence is an independent strategic board, chaired by Professor Lorne Crerar. The Board’s membership is set out at **Annex A**. We recommend that you have an introductory meeting with Professor Crerar.
6. [Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]

Agency Development & Delivery

7. The Scottish Government published a Call for Evidence in 2022 as to the future role of an agency. This found broad stakeholder support for the proposal to establish a new agency, with respondents suggesting key roles including strategic oversight, leadership, coordination and public engagement.

8. As noted above the agency was launched in “virtual form” in October 2022 with an expressed purpose as “*building public understanding of the changes needed, act as a centre of expertise for green heat projects and co-ordinate the delivery of investment programmes*”. A new Heat in Buildings Delivery Division was created February 2023 taking on the role of the virtual agency and a new Deputy Director was recruited to lead the Delivery Division / virtual agency.

9. [Out of Scope]

10.[Out of Scope]

- [Out of Scope]
- [Out of Scope]
- [Out of Scope]

11.[Out of Scope]

12.[Out of Scope]

13.[Out of Scope]

14.[Out of Scope]

15.[Out of Scope]

- [Out of Scope]
- [Out of Scope]
- [Out of Scope]

16.[Out of Scope]

17.[Out of Scope]

18.[Out of Scope]

[Out of Scope]

19.[Out of Scope]

20.[Out of Scope]

21.[Out of Scope]

Agency Development Next Steps

22.[Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]

23.[Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications], officials will commence development of a new brand for the Agency and establish a website.

In the first instance, this will be a portal signposting other sources and will not replace the existing consumer information routes already available via Home Energy Scotland and Business Energy Scotland.

24. [Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]

Independent Strategic Board

25. The Independent Strategic Board, chaired by Lorne Crerar, was established to oversee and advise on the creation of the new agency. The Board first met in October 2022. [Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]

26. [Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]

Bute House Agreement Implications

27. The Bute House Agreement commits to develop a strengthened policy and delivery framework for green homes and buildings. Heat & Energy Efficiency Scotland will be a national delivery body, with a remit to provide the leadership and coordination required to accelerate delivery of the transformational change in the decarbonisation of heat in Scotland.

[Out of Scope]

28. [Out of Scope]

Conclusions and Next Steps

29. [Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]

- a) [Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]
- b) [Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]
- c) Meet the Chair of the Agency's Independent Strategic Board, Professor Lorne Crerar.

30. Officials would be happy to meet with you to discuss the content of this note.

[Redacted - Regulation 11(2) – Personal Data of a third party]
DECC: HiBs Delivery Division

**NATIONAL PUBLIC ENERGY AGENCY-HEAT AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY
SCOTLAND: INDEPENDENT STRATEGIC BOARD MEMBERSHIP**

Professor Lorne Crerar, Chair and founding partner of Harper Macleod

Professor Lorne Crerar CBE FRSE is Harper Macleod's Chair and Founding Partner. He has wide experience of public sector operations and been appointed by The Scottish Government to undertake several independent reviews, including the Enterprise and Skills Review in 2017. He was co-chair of the National Council of Rural Advisers, chair of Highlands and Islands Enterprise from 2012 to 2020 and was appointed to the Rural Economic Action Group. He's Chairman of Scottish Rugby Union.

Vivienne Cockburn, Chartered Accountant

Vivienne is a qualified chartered accountant and an experienced non-executive director. She was previously a director with Scottish Futures Trust where she held various roles. This included leading their input into the development and delivery of low carbon programmes across Scotland.

James Fowlie, COSLA

James is currently Director of Place Policy at COSLA and has worked there for almost 20 years. He was previously a board member of Paths for All and SCDI for over 10 years.

Tricia McAuley, OBE, Consumer Expert

Trisha is an independent consumer expert. She is an experienced chair and non-executive director, with a background in consumer affairs. She is widely recognised as a national consumer expert and was awarded an OBE for services to consumer affairs in 2015.

Sally Thomas, CEO, SFHA

Sally Thomas is Chief Executive at the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA) - the national representative body for Scotland's housing associations and co-operatives. In 2021 she co-chaired the government convened Social Renewal Advisory Board and Zero Emissions Social Housing Task Force.

Mike Thornton, OBE, CEO, Energy Saving Trust

Mike Thornton is chief executive of Energy Saving Trust where he has worked for 20 years. He has over 30 years' experience in the environmental, energy efficiency, transport and recycling sectors.

Graeme Bissett, External Trustee Citizens Advice Scotland

Graeme is a chartered accountant, corporate financier and experienced non-executive chair and director. He has board experience across a range of sectors including energy transition, affordable housing and public infrastructure. Graeme was also Chair at Children 1st and Vice-convenor of Court at the University of Glasgow. He is currently Vice-chair at Citizens Advice Scotland.

Claire Mack, CEO, Scottish Renewables

Claire has been Chief Executive of Scottish Renewables since 2017. She leads the organisation's work to grow Scotland's renewables sector. Claire is a member of the First Minister's Energy Advisory Board. She is also co-chair of both the Renewable Energy Strategic Leadership Group and the Scottish Government Marine Energy Industry Group.

[Out of Scope]

[Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]

From: [Redacted - Regulation 11(2) – Personal Data of a third party]
Energy Agency Development Team
9 February 2022

Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Transport

NATIONAL PUBLIC ENERGY AGENCY: TERMS OF REFERENCE AND MEMBERSHIP OF THE INDEPENDENT STRATEGIC BOARD

Purpose

1. To update you on proposals to establish an Independent Strategic Board (ISB) as part of the proposed governance for the virtual National Public Energy Agency, [Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]:

- [Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]
- [Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]
- [Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]

2. [Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]

3. [Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]

- (i) [Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]
- (ii) [Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]
- (iii) [Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]

Priority

4. Routine.

Background

5. As set out in [Redacted - Regulation 11(2) – Personal Data of a third party] submission of 17 November, and subsequently approved by you, the virtual Agency will be delivered in-house within the Scottish Government [Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications], supported by an ISB. This approach means day to day operational responsibility for existing heat decarbonisation and energy efficiency delivery and support programmes will remain with the Scottish Government [Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications].

6. This approach also aligns with what is set out in the current Call for Evidence, which closed on 8 February. [Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]

(i) Role and Remit

7. Subject to feedback from the Call for Evidence, it is proposed that the ISB will work **in partnership** with the Scottish Government on all aspects of the virtual Agency
[Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]

- [Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]
- [Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]
- [Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]

8. [Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]

(ii) [Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]

[Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]

9. [Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]

10. [Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]

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14. [Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]

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15. [Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]

16. [Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]

(iii) [Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]

17. [Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]

Recommendation

18. You are asked to:

(i) [Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]

- [Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]

(ii) [Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]

- [Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]
- [Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]
- [Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]

(iii) [Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]

- [Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]

19. [Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]

[Redacted - Regulation 11(2) – Personal Data of a third party]
 DECC: Energy Agency Development Team 9 February 2021

Copy List:	For Action	For Comments	For Information		
			Portfolio Interest	Constit Interest	General Awareness
Minister for Zero Carbon Buildings, Active Travel & Tenants' Rights			X		

DG Net Zero
 Kersti Berge
 Sue Kearns
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DECC Operations

ANNEX A

[Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]

OFFICIAL SENSITIVE

From: [Redacted - Regulation 11(2) – Personal Data of a third party]
DECC: Heat in Buildings
10 June 2022

Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Transport

NATIONAL PUBLIC ENERGY AGENCY: UPDATE ON THE VIRTUAL AGENCY LAUNCH SEPTEMBER 2022

Purpose

1. To update on progress with establishing the virtual Agency [Out of Scope]

Priority

2. Routine.

Background

3. As set out in [Redacted - Regulation 11(2) – Personal Data of a third party] submission of 17 November and subsequently approved by you, the virtual Agency will initially be delivered in-house, within existing budgets, and be supported by an independent Strategic Board. This approach means that day to day operational responsibility for existing heat decarbonisation and energy efficiency delivery and support programmes will remain with the Scottish Government [Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]

4. [Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]

Progress

5. There are a number of workstreams that are being progressed to establish a “discrete Agency” in house. The details are:

- **Internal restructuring:** The in-house delivery teams, along with the public engagement and the agency development teams within the heat and buildings division will be restructured to come under the direct management of the SRO for the Energy Agency. In effect, this will become the “virtual Agency” and will operate under the virtual Agency name. [Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]
- **Independent Strategic Board:** You have previously agreed the remit of the Board which is to: (1) produce a clear route map for transition to the dedicated body, (2) develop a strong public-facing identity for the Agency and (3) support the design and development of the dedicated Agency. You have also approved the Chair - Professor Lorne Crear - [Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]
- **Agency Name:** [Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]

OFFICIAL SENSITIVE

- **Web Presence:** We are proposing a web presence for the virtual Agency, [Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]. The key aim is to streamline the information, making it easier to navigate depending on individual needs and circumstances.
- **Public Engagement:** One of the Agency’s functions will be public engagement. [Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]
- **Other related/linked activity:** Other work being progressed that will be part of the virtual Agency- as the teams who are leading on this work will be operating under the virtual agency name from September- include, new grant schemes for homeowners and SMEs, new national scheme to support heat decarbonisation and reduce fuel poverty (replacement for Warmer Homes Scotland), launch of the £25m Clyde Mission Heat Decarbonisation Fund, a Heat in Buildings Summit with industry convened by the Minister for Zero Carbon Buildings, Active Travel and Tenants’ Rights and publication of the Supply Chain Delivery Plan. [Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications].

[Out of Scope]

6. [Out of Scope]

7. [Out of Scope]

Recommendations

8 You are invited to:

- **Note the progress with establishing the virtual Agency in-house as outlined in paragraph 5,** [Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]
- [Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]

[Redacted - Regulation 11(2) – Personal Data of a third party]

DECC: Heat in Buildings

10 June 2022

Copy List:	For Action	For Comments	For Information		
			Portfolio Interest	Constit Interest	General Awareness
Minister for Zero Carbon Buildings, Active Travel and Tenants’ rights			x		

DG Net Zero Kersti Berge Sue Kearns

National Public Energy Agency

This briefing covers:

- (1) Virtual Agency Update/announcement
- (2) [Out of Scope]
- (3) Interest from NZET committee

(1) Virtual Agency Update/announcement

Background

- Programme for Government 2021/22: To have a virtual agency established within the coming year and a dedicated physical agency by September 2025, which will lead and coordinate the transformational change needed to decarbonise heat across our homes and buildings by 2045.

Progress to Date

- In virtual form, the Agency will be delivered in-house, working with key delivery partners including, Scottish Futures Trust, Zero Waste Scotland and the Energy Saving Trust.
- A new delivery division, housed within the Directorate for Energy & Climate change is being created, and included within this is a new dedicated support unit for heat networks, which will form the core of a new centre of expertise.
- An independent Strategic Board has been created to help steer the design and development of the dedicated Agency, and support the transition process. The chair is Professor Lorne Crerar, CBE FRSE founding partner and current chair of Harper Macleod.
- [Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]

Announcement

- The substance of the announcement is:
- The name of the virtual Agency - [Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]
 - The establishment of the independent Strategic Board
 - The members are:
 - Professor Lorne Crerar, Chair, Harper Macleod
 - Tricia McAuley OBE, Consumer Expert
 - Viv Cockburn, Director Cockburn Partners
 - Claire Mack, CEO, Scottish Renewables
 - Sally Thomas, CEO, Scottish Federation of Housing Associations
 - Graeme Bissett, External Trustee Citizens Advice Scotland

- Mike Thornton, CEO, Energy Saving trust
- James Fowlie, Director of Place Policy, COSLA
- Plans to establish a new internal delivery division with Scottish Government [Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]
 - The new unit will operate as a discrete Agency [Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications] with a remit to accelerate transformational change in how we heat and use energy in homes and buildings, aid public understanding and awareness, and co-ordinate delivery of investment. This is the first step in transitioning to a dedicated body by 2025.
- [Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]
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(2) [Out of Scope]

(3) Interest from the convener NZET committee

- Over the last year, as convener of the NZET Committee, Mr Lockhart has asked about the virtual [Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications] on numerous occasions, timeline summary below. His key questions are:
 - How many staff the new Agency will have
 - The budget for the new Agency

- The most recent PQs – 25 August- holding replies were issued in advance of the announcement being made on 27 September.

[Redacted - Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communications]

Summary of interest

Details
<p>NZET Committee 14/9/2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In questioning why SG was not pursuing a public energy company, instead was establishing an energy Agency- the convener asked what was a virtual agency and if it had budget or estimate for staffing of new Agency. <p>Response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's about scaling up; big challenge is the pace to take this forward. Need to act now, start with a virtual Agency. On budget and staff- virtual Agency will be using existing resources but will look at skills and resource needed for a full permanent Agency.
<p>NZET Committee 1/2/2022</p> <p>The committee was asking questions on the Scottish budget, the convener asked:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if additional funding had been provided for the energy Agency in the Scottish budget • is it still for the time being a virtual Agency? does it have dedicated staffing and resource. • Will the Agency actively be involved to assist Local Authorities,? • Are there plans to accelerate the Agency and make it an urgent priority, going back to my point about scale of investment and the amount of resource in the Agency- clock is ticking to 2030 target date. <p>Response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is being managed internally within existing budgets. There is no specific ring-fenced budget, it is being managed within my portfolio budget, and is taken into account in our budget lines for this FY. • There will be a dedicated team in SG that helps to draw the Agency together initially with a view to ramping it up and developing it to be much more stand- alone- not entirely separate from SG. However, that is a couple of years away from the work that is necessary to get it up and running
<p>Written PQ Dean Lockhart - 25/2/2022</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ask the SG when the proposed National Public Energy Agency will be operational; how many full-time dedicated staff it will employ; what its annual budget will be, and when it anticipates that the virtual agency will move to being a standalone organisation. <p>Response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As set out in the PfG we made a commitment to create a National Public Energy Agency. We will work to have a virtual Agency established this year, and a dedicated physical Agency by September 2025.

- The virtual Agency will be in place throughout the transition period until a standalone Agency is in place.
- This is an ongoing area of work, and as a first step we launched a consultation in December 2021 which closed on 8 February to help inform development of the design of the new body. Consultation responses are currently being analysed and further details will be released as the work evolves.

NZET Committee – 26/4/2022

Mr Harvie was appearing before the committee to discuss the LHEES SSI. The final question from the convener was on the Agency, and the challenge of the work to be undertaken around heat decarbonisation. He mentioned a previous appearance by Mr Matheson who stated that the virtual Agency would be in place later this year, with no additional staff. In responding Mr Harvie undertook to provide an update to the committee on the Agency.

Response

Mr Matheson wrote to the convener on 6 May updating on progress. In terms of responding to the issue on staffing, he stated this would be considered as the shape of the Agency is progressed over the coming months. Other issues highlighted were the Call for Evidence response, the independent report on the analysis of responses has been send to the committee, and that an independent strategic board would be established to work in partnership with SG to help shape and design the Agency.

S6W-10172 Dean Lockhart: 25 August 2022 To ask the Scottish Government, regarding the non-virtual National Public Energy Agency, whether it will provide (a) an update on when it will be set up and (b) details of (i) what services it will provide, (ii) how many staff it will employ and (iii) what its annual budget will be.

Answer

I reaffirm the answer to S6W-06416, and in my letter of 6 May to you as convener of the Net Zero, Energy and Transport committee about the National Public Energy Agency. Specifically, as set out in the Scottish Government's a Fairer, greener Scotland: Programme for Government 2021-22, we made a commitment to create a National Public Energy Agency by September 2025. This is an ongoing area of work, and issues such as staffing and budget will be considered as the work to develop and design the Agency progresses over this parliamentary period.

S6W-10173 Dean Lockhart: 25 August 2022 To ask the Scottish Government whether it will provide (a) an update on when the virtual National Public Energy Agency will be established and (b) details of (i) how many people it will employ and (ii) what services it will provide.

I reaffirm the answer to S6W-06416, and in my letter of 6 May to you as convener of the Net Zero, Energy and Transport committee about the National Public Energy Agency. Specifically, that we will work to have a virtual Agency established this

year, which will be in place throughout the transition period until a standalone Agency is in place. I indicated that an independent Strategic Board will be established to work in partnership with the Scottish Government to help us with this work.

I will announce details of the board members shortly, along with an update on the virtual Agency, which I have previously advised would remain under our control until a constituted body has been established but would operate under the virtual Agency banner and within existing budgets.