

ITEM 1:**BUILDING A NEW SCOTLAND: A STRONGER ECONOMY WITH INDEPENDENCE -
TOPICAL BRIEF – ENERGY****Key Messages:**

- Scotland's massive renewable energy resources can be the bedrock of a new independent economy. Our renewable energy potential is vast, and can become the source of affordable, low-carbon energy, both for security of supply and energy self-reliance in Scotland, and to export to our neighbours.
- Independence would enable Scotland to deal more effectively with the current energy crisis. Acceleration of renewables deployment to produce electricity would reduce our reliance on fossil fuels and our exposure to the sort of price volatility we have seen due to electricity prices being driven by the price of gas.
- An independent Scotland would design our electricity market: either in joint design the UK or under a different system. We would do whatever is in Scotland's interests. This would allow us to break the link between the price of electricity and the price of gas, which is a key factor driving the high prices.

Background

- Onshore wind accounts for about 70% of our current renewable energy capacity, followed by hydro and offshore wind, and we have potential to massively expand in all of these sectors. As of June 2022, 378 renewable electricity projects with a capacity of 16.3 GW are in the development pipeline in Scotland, and ScotWind have provided leasing rights for 28GW offshore wind, subject to consenting. By way of context peak domestic demand in Scotland is between 5-6GW, so we have the capacity to deliver not only Scotland's renewable energy ambitions but to help deliver that of neighbouring nations.
- A transition to a new energy market would allow us to support new and evolving technologies, to decide which technologies to support, and working within EU and international law, how much support to provide. It would enable us to accelerate deployment of renewables to further reduce reliance on fossil fuels, and introduce measures to keep electricity affordable.

Lines to take:Energy Crisis

- Currently in the GB market, the wholesale price of electricity is driven by the most expensive form of generation, which at present is gas-fired power plants. We must break that link and decouple the market price of renewables, and low carbon electricity from the cost of gas.
- Renewable electricity is cheaper – offshore and onshore wind farms can provide electricity at a lower cost than nuclear or gas-fired power plants.

Energy Market

- In independent Scotland we would work to design and deliver an energy market that works in Scotland's interests and delivers Scotland's vast energy potential.
- We would aim not only to ensure energy self-reliance and generate enough green electricity to power Scotland, but also to export increasing amounts of low carbon energy, supporting security of supply and helping to meet our decarbonisation ambitions.

ITEM 2

The following information is an extract. It is provided as an extract because it comes from a document containing other information outwith the scope of your request.

9. Energy

Would an independent Scotland want to stay in the GB energy market given criticisms that the market isn't working for consumers? What if UK wants something different?

The GB energy market has to be fundamentally reformed to deliver lower prices for consumers and accelerate renewables deployment.

In an independent Scotland, we would work to design and deliver an energy market that works in Scotland's interests and delivers Scotland's vast energy potential. We would look to do this either as an equal partner in a joint design authority with the UK Government or under a different system.

We would aim not only to ensure energy self-reliance and generate enough green electricity to power Scotland, but also to export increasing amounts of low carbon energy, supporting security of supply and helping to meet our decarbonisation ambitions.

More detail will be set out later in the independence prospectus papers series.

REASONS FOR NOT PROVIDING INFORMATION

Regulation 10(4)(e) – internal communications

An exception under regulation 10(4)(e) of the EIRs (internal communications) applies to some of the information you have requested because it is internal communication between Scottish Government Ministers and officials about future policy where final decisions have not been taken.

This exception is subject to the ‘public interest test’. Therefore, taking account of all the circumstances of this case, we have considered if the public interest in disclosing the information outweighs the public interest in applying the exception. We have found that, on balance, the public interest lies in favour of upholding the exception. We recognise that there is some public interest in release as part of open, transparent and accountable government, and to inform public debate. However, there is a greater public interest in high quality policy and decision-making, and in the properly considered implementation and development of policies and decisions. This means that Ministers and officials need to be able to consider all available options and to debate those rigorously, to fully understand their possible implications. Their candour in doing so will be affected by their assessment of whether the discussions on the GB electricity market will be disclosed in the near future, when it may undermine or constrain the Government’s view on that issue while it is still under discussion and development.

Regulation 10(4)(a) – information not held

Under the terms of the exception at regulation 10(4)(a) of the EIRs (information not held), the Scottish Government is not required to provide information which it does not have. The Scottish Government does not have the information you have requested.

This exception is subject to the ‘public interest test’. Therefore, taking account of all the circumstances of this case, we have considered if the public interest in disclosing the information outweighs the public interest in applying the exception. We have found that, on balance, the public interest lies in favour of upholding the exception. While we recognise that there may be some public interest in information about this issue, we cannot provide information which we do not hold.