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### 'AR7 budget won't unlock floating wind potential'

Industry leaders have taken aim at the size of the budget allocated to support floating wind in the UK's Allocation Round 7 Contracts for Difference auction this year. **p2**

### Industry a key 'focus' in GB Energy strategy

Floating wind has been tipped to emerge as a key priority area for the public body. **p2**

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# Developers urged to hold their nerve

Scotland's Deputy First Minister Kate Forbes has urged developers to "hang on" to the opportunities offered by the country's floating offshore wind pipeline.

In a keynote address to the FOW 25 conference in Aberdeen today, she acknowledged the sector is in a "critical moment" as industry players combat rising costs, supply chain constraints and a worsening investment environment.

Forbes said her government will back developers "to the hilt" to deliver on 30GW-plus of schemes ready for construction, in planning or at earlier stages of development.

"It may feel like a period of uncertainty now... but we believe in the potential of this sector to deliver," she told the conference.

"We need to hold on to the opportunity and work through the challenges.

"I hope that in six months to two years' time we will look back at how we navigated this and came out stronger."

Confidence in Scotland's floating wind sector was knocked earlier this week



**HANG TOUGH: Kate Forbes**

Photo: Scottish Renewables

following Shell's withdrawal from two key ScotWind projects.

The 2GW ChampionWind has been spiked while the 3GW MarramWind will now be taken forward by the oil giant's former joint venture partner ScottishPower Renewables.

Forbes pointed to recent efforts made by Holyrood to shore-up investment, including £150m in supply chain funding that has been provided to the wider offshore wind industry in the past 18 months.

She urged the UK government to accelerate electricity market reforms and overhaul grid charging mechanisms that have been blamed for holding up investment decisions north of the border. "We need all governments to take responsibility," Forbes added.

"The recipe to get through this is being collaborative and absolutely clear-headed on the opportunities and why it is worth navigating these choppy waters."

The politician meanwhile addressed proposals by Chinese turbine manufacturer Mingyang to develop a £1.5bn factory at Ardersier near Inverness, which the Scottish government has welcomed as a preferred location for the site that would supply UK and European projects.

The plans, however, remain under scrutiny by London due to potential national security implications.

Forbes said: "We have been very open that offshore wind needs to deliver benefits to the Scottish supply chain. We want to see inward investment in all areas right across the board.

"It is for the UK government to decide (on the factory) for well-documented reasons and I'm not going to prejudice that process.

"I want to see local content in Scotland and I'm not going to jump across a UK government decision," said Forbes.

### TRENDING ON reNEWS.BIZ

#### Haskoning to lead EIA for 1.5GW Gwynt Glas

Haskoning has been appointed as lead environmental impact assessment consultant for EDF-ESB's 1.5GW Gwynt Glas floating offshore wind project in the Celtic Sea.

[Click here](#)

#### Global floating wind capacity rises 13% in a year

Installed floating offshore wind capacity has increased 13% worldwide over the past year, according to RenewableUK.

[Click here](#)

#### RWE completes foundation work at 1.1GW Thor

RWE has wrapped up foundation installation at the 1.1GW Thor offshore wind farm off Denmark. Turbine work is due to begin in spring 2026, with commissioning scheduled for 2027.

[Click here](#)

#### CWHI advances Inch Cape TP fabrication

CNOOD-Wenchong Heavy Industries (CWHI) has completed the fabrication of 18 transition pieces for ESB and Red Rock Renewables' 1.1GW Inch Cape wind farm off Scotland.

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#### Mingyang partners with ORE Catapult on testing

Mingyang has signed a testing agreement with the UK's ORE Catapult to validate the main bearing for its 18.5MW offshore wind turbine.

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# 'AR7 budget won't unlock floating wind potential'

Industry leaders have taken aim at the size of the budget allocated to support floating wind in the UK's Allocation Round 7 Contracts for Difference auction this year.

RenewableUK deputy chief executive Jane Cooper told FOW 25 in Aberdeen that securing offtake for as many projects as possible is "crucial" if the industry is to maintain momentum and "build on the UK's position as a global leader" in the technology.

Up to 458.4MW of total capacity comprising five test and demonstration projects was eligible to enter the bidding window, which opened this week.

However, analysts have predicted the £180m earmarked for Pot 4 could mean less than half of that will clear the auction.

"While welcome, (£180m) is short of what is needed to unlock the full potential



**FINANCIAL FLASHPOINT:**  
**Jane Cooper, RUK deputy chief executive** Photo: RUK

of floating wind in the UK," added Cooper.

"Floating wind is materialising, it is real, and it is natural that we want the pot to be bigger."

Flotation Energy chief executive Barry Macleod agreed the budget is "somewhat constrained" and

"tighter than expected".

Innovative Climate Solutions director Una Brosnan added that supporting sub-100MW test and demonstration schemes is "instrumental to get under the hood of the technology and lean into the logistics (of delivery)" ahead of deploying larger assets in the UK pipeline.

Offshore wind programme director at energy department DESNZ Dr Nicola Higgins said the UK government "sees the importance of the sector".

She pointed to reforms introduced this year that allow Energy Secretary Ed Miliband to adjust the AR7 budget after reviewing the bid stack, potentially allowing more capacity to come through.

She added: "I'm sure some of you would like to see the pot being bigger, but we've made reforms, so it is open, and we look forward to seeing the result in January."

## Industry to be a key 'focus' in debut GB Energy strategy

Great British Energy's director of business development and partnerships Tim Cullen has tipped floating wind to emerge as a key priority area for the public body as it prepares to publish its debut strategy document and investment plan for the next three years.

Cullen said providing equity to projects and pledging greater amounts of supply chain funding are among the recommendations that he has made to the GB Energy board.

He said the board had also heard arguments to prioritise flexible storage, onshore renewables on public land, and the "strong continuance of local and community projects" as it nears sign-off on the blueprint.

"We are still discussing this with our board," added Cullen. "Floating wind is definitely one of our focus areas."

The strategy document is not expected to provide a detailed breakdown of capital spending, Cullen said.

## Flotation Energy boss backs calls from gas players to overhaul profits levy

Flotation Energy chief executive Barry Macleod has urged the UK government to heed calls from the North Sea oil and gas industry to overhaul the Energy Profits Levy (EPL).

He said he hopes to see the move being made in this month's budget announcement in order to stem job losses in the sector

and secure a supply of skills and expertise that are transferable to offshore wind.

"We need to see the Treasury pick up on the recommendations made by Offshore Energy UK to make changes to the EPL," Macleod said.

"For the energy transition to work you need those skills to be here."



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# Floating wind sector faces its toughest challenge yet

Hard things are hard, so read a plaque on President Obama's Resolute Desk. Gifted in 2010, the plaque stayed in place until his departure six years later.

Closer to home, the UK's offshore wind capacity increased sevenfold in that same period — a remarkable achievement powered by a decade of stable, supportive policy.

Today, we stand on the cusp of another giant leap.

Building on a strong operational fleet with strategic assets like Seagreen, Moray East and Moray West, we now have a future pipeline of more than 40GW, including around 25GW of pioneering floating offshore wind with projects such as Green Volt, Salamander and Pentland.

But the world is a very different place to 2010. Global shocks have exposed the UK's energy insecurity as we grapple with high capital costs, sticky inflation and sluggish growth.

At the same time, we are pushing ahead with the biggest transformation of our



Investment, policy and infrastructure must align to keep the UK's energy transition on course, writes Scottish Renewables chief executive **Claire Mack**

national energy infrastructure and supply in decades, a transition built largely by private capital.

It's a leap we cannot afford to miss, but neither can we assume it will simply happen.

Our energy transition is facing some of its biggest tests yet — and nowhere is this more acute than in Scotland.

The age and stage of Scotland's offshore energy sectors are poles apart: mature oil and gas assets on one side, emerging offshore wind projects on the other. But both are now slowing and without intervention, we risk stalling Scotland's energy future.

Balancing the managed decline of one sector while

accelerating the growth of another is a tall order but entirely possible with the right interventions.

In the weeks ahead, we need to create a more attractive investment climate to kickstart cost reduction and project construction.

Replacing the Energy Profits Levy and boosting the budget for Allocation Round 7 would mark a strong start for Scotland and the UK.

We also need to build longer-term resilience.

That is hard in a world of quick takes and instant expectations, yet projects of national scale and their associated benefits take years to deliver.

Scotland should take

confidence that we have every advantage: a globally significant energy skills base, world-class subsea expertise and some of the best natural resources on the planet.

At the heart of this new energy era will be floating offshore wind.

Our ambition to lead the world is not self-congratulation, it is a rallying call to use these strengths before others do.

That will demand more predictable auctions. Contracts for Difference is the right mechanism, but an annual rollercoaster that underperforms will deter investment and restrict value from reaching consumers and communities.

It will also require new ways to secure the most tangible benefits of this transition: jobs, training and regeneration.

That means a stable flow of contracts in our ports, build-out of new electricity networks and support for the heavy industry that can manufacture turbines, cables and foundations in the UK.

Hard things are hard but the hardest things can also be the most transformative.

Allowing our offshore wind ambitions to wither would be harshly judged in the years ahead, as investment and opportunity drift overseas. Politicians seeking quick headlines would be wise to reflect.

But if we seize this moment, we can build a future powered by secure, affordable, homegrown energy and, with it, a more resilient economy for generations to come. ■

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# THE INTERVIEW

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**Clare Lavelle** (left), Buchan Offshore Wind project director, discusses government support for floating projects, the challenges of scaling up construction, and the risks posed to grid connection timelines

**Q** What is Buchan's key message for the industry at the Floating Offshore Wind conference this year?

**A** This has been a real landmark year for the project, having submitted our onshore and offshore consent applications, completed ground investigations at the location of our landfall and onshore substation, and matured the design and independent certification of our foundation and moorings.

Similarly, it's been an important 12 months for our partner BW Ideol, having achieved type-certification for its floating wind platform for up to 15MW turbines, completing fabrication of the three substructures for the EolMed project, and successfully bidding for significant European Commission funding for a manufacturing plant in the south of France.

We believe that these steps put us in a great position as we seek to move from development to delivery over the next two to three years, and to support the development of BW Ideol's proposed manufacturing plant at the Ardersier Energy Transition Facility.

**Q** What does the sector need to see from government to support project delivery – are there any key 'asks' of policymakers?

**A** The development of floating offshore wind is a unique opportunity to grow a UK-based supply chain, but we will only achieve that with continued

support from government and a continued focus on moving projects from development to delivery.

That requires ministers to recognise floating wind as a key part of the future growth of low carbon energy in the Strategic Spatial Energy Plan, continued allocation to CfD budgets at an appropriate scale for the project pipeline, a relentless focus on delivering the strategic grid upgrades required to connect our projects on time, and a move away from punitive locational signals in transmission charging.

**Q** How must the supply chain be prepared/evolved to meet the demands of the UK's floating wind pipeline?

**A** As a project, we are committed to manufacturing our concrete substructures at a port side location in Scotland, and we are investing significant time and energy in making this happen. This could see up to 2900 jobs at the peak of construction and while that's a tremendous opportunity for Scotland, scaling up to that kind of level over the next few years is clearly going to be a challenge for the supply chain.

Floating wind will also drive a significant increase in demand for a number of specific goods and services, such as mooring systems, anchoring and dynamic cables. Again, that is a potential challenge but it is also a huge opportunity and one that is well aligned with existing capability within the UK civil engineering and oil and gas sector.

**Q** What is the number one challenge for floating offshore wind developers in the UK right now and how can it be addressed?

**A** Having worked hard to de-risk the actual project, it's probably uncertainty across a number of fundamental policy areas, such the scale of ambition for floating wind in the Strategic Spatial Energy Plan when published next year, future CfD allocation round parameters and budgets, and the role for 'locational signals' in transmission charging.

Each of these could have a huge impact on our project and the wider sector. I would also highlight the risks to our grid connection being delivered on time with Ofgem recently consulting on later deadlines for completion of some important transmission upgrades.

**Q** Can you provide an update on the development of Buchan – any big milestones coming up, and what is the current delivery timeline?

**A** Having submitted our applications for onshore and offshore consents, we are now waiting for decisions by the Scottish government and Aberdeenshire Council, and we would hope to be granted consent for both parts of the project next year.

Our current base case is that we will be seeking to start construction in 2029 and commence operations in the early to mid-2030s.

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# FLOATING OFFSHORE WIND 2025

## Morning keynote

Scottish Renewables chief executive Claire Mack will open day two of the FOW 25 conference in Aberdeen with a keynote address to delegates.

**0930-0945, Conference Suite 1**

## Navigating the market

Panelists will discuss pathways to de-risking the delivery of floating offshore wind at scale, the UK policy landscape, and the role of future Contracts for Difference rounds in supporting the sector. With insights from MUFG Bank, the Scottish National Investment Bank, Shepherd and Wedderburn and Buchan Offshore Wind.

**0945-1045, Conference Suite 1**

## UK government address

Energy minister Michael Shanks will deliver remarks to the conference to provide a perspective on the market from the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero.

**1045-1100, Conference Suite 1**

## Celtic Sea

A panel discussion focused on delivering floating wind projects in the Celtic Sea, featuring insights from

## THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

the Welsh government, Crown Estate, Equinor, Port of Milford Haven, Associated British Ports and the Offshore Wind Growth Partnership.

**1130-1230, Conference Suite 1**

## Hot topics

Short presentations with Q&As on a range of topics including tariffs, decommissioning, machine learning and buoyancy solutions.

**1130-1230, Conference Suite 2A**

## Port talk

Panel conversation diving into all things port-related,

with perspectives from Orkney Harbours, Fugro, Muir Mhor Offshore Wind and Great British Energy.

**1330-1430, Conference Suite 1**

## Grid connections

Hear views from the industry about how floating wind can navigate the challenges of grid planning and the future network build-out. Experts from DNV, SSEN Transmission, Ofgem, ESB and NESO will give their thoughts.

**1500-1555, Conference Suite 1**

## Conference close

Scottish Renewables offshore director Colin Palmer will round out FOW 25 with closing remarks to the conference, sharing key takeaways and reflections from two days in Aberdeen.

**1700, Exhibition Hall**



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